

How 6000 People Begged Mrs. Harriman for \$267,000,000!

The Remarkable Efforts of the Financier's Widow
to Discover the Worthy Among Those Who
Asked Her For Three Times Her Entire Fortune--
And the Surprising Things She Found Out

"You will never miss it," is the favorite argument of the begging letter.

Policy of this argument is set in the authorized statement within two years after the death of E. H. Harriman, his widow received 6,000 begging letters asking for an aggregate of \$267,000,000.

It is the conscientious, philanthropically inclined master or mistress of millions to do in such a manner? Laboriously examine the merits of each application for aid, submit to being insulted, or throw all the begging letters into the waste basket?

Harriman chose the course of strength. First, to the limit of the strength of those 6,000 beggars. Then, convinced that they contained legitimate requests, she submitted the whole correspondence for expert analysis. William H. Allen, Director of the Bureau of Municipal Research and Training School for Public Service. The extremely interesting and often surprising result of Allen's book, lately issued by Head & Co., N. Y., and called "Philanthropy: A Study of the Art of Giving."

In explaining why so much study was given to these letters, Mr. Allen, who seems to be speaking for Mrs. Harriman, says:

"The first twenty or thirty letters read: 'You will never miss such a trifle, while to me one thousand dollars would look like Heaven itself, the heart response is immediate. It seems imperative to answer an appeal to save a tuberculosis patient, rescue a paralyzed baby, rebuild a church that was struck by lightning, supply the last fifty thousand toward a college which will illumine a State, or give an old couple the longed-for trip back home.'

"What right have I with an income of \$50 or \$600 a day to hesitate when I pass distress, or when it comes to me in my morning mail?"

"Is there any lesson in these hundreds of appeals for me, for others who want to give wisely, for those who ask and for those who are trying to understand, interpret and direct social forces?"

So even personal letters were carefully analyzed that contained excuses like these:

"I have set my alarm clock for 2 a. m. Each time it rings I will rise and ask God to ask you for \$50,000."

"God loveth a cheerful giver."

"May the Holy Spirit do His work in your heart and lead you to give \$1,500,000!" (to a Western university)

\$267,000,000, while various institutions in foreign countries asked for \$6,000,000. Yet, writes the expert:

"With few exceptions requests are prefaced with the assurance that writers want only what Mrs. Harriman would never miss."

Two out of three of these begging letters were from women; less than ten per cent asked aid for others--the majority of these personal beggars had "troubles of their own." One letter in twenty-five, only, was from a minor; but these were nearly always altruistic, often in the interest of "mamma, who is sick and worrying for the debts." Only about one in ten of the personal letters were from illiterate persons, while 238 were apparently from persons of far more than average education.

"It is not merely the slum-dweller," writes Mr. Allen, "or the slum-worker in a great city who writes to the rich men and women advertised in the press. On the contrary, 3,500 different localities are represented by these 6,000 appeals. For Mrs. Harriman's office and our own we prepared two pin maps indicating the localities in the United States after the first 2,000 letters had come. Little black pins mean individuals asking for themselves and families. Large red pins are used for colleges and universities, little red ones for industrial schools, etc.; white for churches, green for hospitals, yellow for boys' clubs; blue for homes and asylums, lavender for scientific and civic bodies.

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A few simple pretty clothes for a girl of 22. "Do you blame me for not wanting to marry him when he is wealthy unless I have them?"

"Merely the gift of an automobile for my aged mother and myself, which would be nothing in your sight; \$400 in the Lord's name," for a minister whose present automobile is worn out.

"A tombstone so expensive that I am unable to do much, still it is a sacred duty."

Money to put an artificial leg on the market.

Twenty-five dollars to pay for copyright of a drama.

Fifty dollars to carry out a plan to keep a family of twelve children from tormenting their neighbors.

To pay debts contracted without her husband's knowledge.

"This letter will reach you on Saturday. Will you have the kindness to send me an answer by special delivery, as on Sunday ordinary mail is not circulated. My time is limited in this hotel."

"One of the freakiest letters," writes Mr. Allen, "fairly reeking with insincerity, was from a man who claimed to have spent ten years demonstrating from first-hand contact that 'it is worth while to investigate the horrors, disgraces, malevolent and ignorant outrages, procedures intensely dangerous to health and life itself, now borne with equanimity and patience by all the generous and trustful public.... among ordinary cheap restaurants where the majority of our Americans are now getting their pot luck.'"

The tactlessness of many of these mendicant letter writers was amazing. A wife whose husband was "in bad health and unable to work" ad-

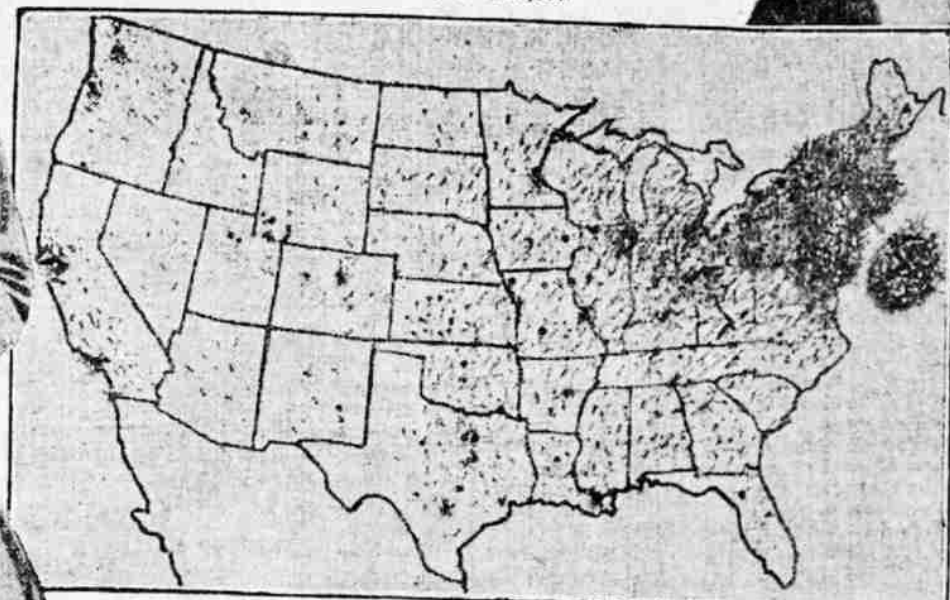


Above is Mary Harriman, Now Mrs. C. C. Rumssey; Below Miss Carol Harriman, Daughter Whose Financial Welfare the Late Mr. Harriman Left in His Wife's Hands Together with His Whole Fortune.

"All the world seemed to Mrs. Harriman to be reaching out a begging hand to her. Behind the appealing hand she knew were real need, real merit, real opportunities for philanthropy—but how to FIND THEM OUT?"

What They Asked For

- 1800 Wanted Outright Gifts of \$5,000,000.
- 517 Wanted "Loans" of \$5,000,000.
- 216 Wanted to Sell Objects for \$5,000,000.
- 238 Wanted Employment and Investment Tips.
- 330 Wanted Business Capital of \$5,000,000.
- 500 Wanted \$1,500,000 to Buy Homes.
- 206 Wanted \$120,000 for Medical Care.
- 1100 American Benevolent Agencies Asked \$207,000,000.
- 1400 Foreign Letters Asked for \$32,000,000.
- 150 Foreign Institutions Asked for \$5,000,000.
- Mrs. Harriman's Entire Fortune is Only \$75,000,000.



Mrs. Mary W. Harriman, Widow of the Late Financier.

Mrs. Harriman's Begging Map—the Most Remarkable Map in the World, as the Begging Letters Came in the Places They Were Sent from. Were Marked with Pins—Little Black Pins for Individuals, Large Red Pins for Colleges and Universities, Little Red Pins for Industrial Schools, etc., White for Churches, Green for Hospitals, Yellow for Boys' Clubs, Blue for Homes, Lavender for Scientific and Civic Bodies. The Colors of the Pins Cannot Be Seen on Their Distribution Can Be. The Illustration is from Director William H. Allen's "Modern Philanthropy: A Study of the Art of Giving."

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It is recognized that begging letters must be examined carefully as a basis for discriminate and helpful giving. In some cases a begging letter furnishes evidence that the writer should have other attention at once—that some one should "ring for an ambulance." For instance:

"A man who leaves his wife and children in an institution and borrows money from hotel clerks with which to buy newspaper and Bible quotations to further 'one of the greatest constructive schemes to make \$250,000,000' should be examined for his sanity. Otherwise, instead of becoming one of the most 'helpful, progressive and useful men of my time,' he may easily become a homicide."

Accordingly—with Mrs. Harriman's encouragement—Mr. Allen's book ends with a carefully thought-out "Magna Charta for Givers."

Heat That Makes Iron Boil Like Water

FOR some years past scientific men have been striving to produce heat fiercer than any temperature of which we have experience in ordinary life. The greatest heat ever developed by the agency of man was obtained by Sir Andrew Noble, who exploded cordite in closed vessels, so that a pressure of fifty tons to the square inch was registered, and a degree of heat never previously recorded.

The highest temperature reached in fuel furnaces for practical purposes is between 1,700 and 1,800 degrees centigrade, and at such a heat fireclay and porcelain are melted. Then we come to the flame fed with hydrogen and oxygen, or oxygen and coal gas; by these means a temperature of 2,000 degrees centigrade may be obtained.

A new industry solely dependent upon the employment of great heat is that of melting quartz. This mineral, fused by the oxy-hydrogen flame, is converted into tubes and flasks and other vessels for chemical purposes. These vessels are absolutely inert, and may be heated hundreds of degrees higher than is possible with glass; they may also be plunged at such heat into cold water without injury.